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Educational News and Editorial Comment

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

A number of new lines of activity will be taken up by the *School Review* during the autumn months and through the early numbers of the next volume.

Two series of articles are projected, one beginning in November, the other in December. The first will deal with the high-school principal and his duties. A number of principals have promised to contribute from their experience and to describe in full how they do their work.

The second series will be by Professor Jernegan and will give a new kind of history of American schools. The historical method has seldom been applied to the study of the educational institutions of this country. Histories of education have been translations of European books or they have dealt chiefly with matters of theory. It is opportune that at this

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time, when all our institutions are of such absorbing interest to our aroused national consciousness, we should gain a deeper view of how American schools came to have their present organization.

Superintendent Spaulding will contribute discussions on two aspects of school organization in which he has been especially successful, namely, on the organization of teachers' councils and the preparation of the budget.

Mr. Irwin has some material on tests in geometry. Several other lines of experimental work dealing with the high-school curriculum are nearly ready for reports.

The *School Review* hopes to enlist more than ever before the coöperation of high-school teachers and principals by bringing out with every issue live discussions of the most important aspects of secondary education. The editors will be glad to receive articles and notes and will aim to keep the regular departments as well as the article section at the highest level possible.

FEDERAL PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

The Federal Government is steadily moving in the direction of more and more participation in matters educational. The time-honored theory that education is under the exclusive control of the states has gradually been growing weaker in the face of national demand.

In the early history of the newer states the federal power came to the support of education by providing land grants for the support of schools. During the Civil War Congress gave funds for agricultural education. These funds for the promotion of scientific studies of agriculture and for the distribution of the results of such studies have been increased from time to time until the Department of Agriculture at Washington is one of the most important educational forces in the world. Its influence is felt today in all grades of

schools. Through the Smith-Lever law elementary schools and high schools have come in a very important sense under the supervision of the Department.

When the Philippine Islands came under the control of the United States and when our Government took responsibility for Porto Rico and other island territories, the Federal Government once more found that it must assume the task of organizing education. In these cases the agents of the Federal Government have shown initiative and have been able because of the unhampered conditions under which they set up schools to make at one stroke certain broad experiments in education which were less possible in established state systems. For example, the Philippine schools are today models in the matter of hand work.

The next step in the progress of federal control of education was in the direction of industrial training. The manufacturers of this country want trained workers. Schools of the traditional type do not produce skilled workers. For the past fifteen years the pressure, social and political, in favor of industrial education has been strong and with the passage of the Smith-Hughes law the Federal Government undertook on a large scale the promotion of trade training and education of girls for domestic duties. The Federal Board for Vocational Education, once organized and in operation, has been steadily enlarging the sphere of its operations. It was lately given a grant to cover the training of disabled soldiers returning to this country. Under this grant its supervision will extend into all kinds of educational institutions, many of which have no relation to its original field of operation, which was industrial education.

With the war have come a host of new demands for federal participation in education. There are children in government reservations which are inhabited by people making munitions. These children must be educated and the Ordnance Depart-

ment of the United States Army has taken up the school-master's task for somewhat more than 15,000 pupils.

There is need of training of illiterates in the Army. The Y. M. C. A. has a large organization which is trying to standardize its work in order to meet the expectations of the War Department. The War Department and Army authorities are more and more officially sanctioning this work and depending on it to make efficient soldiers. The War Department is training mechanics and has lately inaugurated a plan for the enlistment of all boys in college for the purpose of keeping them there and making them more efficient for public service.

Such an array of facts, and we have of set purpose omitted all reference to the Bureau of Education, makes it perfectly clear that the Federal Government is in the business of education on a huge scale.

SHALL WE HAVE A NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION?

One of the chief obstacles to the organization of a National Department of Education grows out of the manifoldness of national educational enterprises. There is at the present moment so much educational work going on in all departments of our Government that a new federal department could hardly absorb into itself all educational activities. The fact is, no government ever had more to do with education in a broad sense than has our own. This is as it should be in a democracy but it makes it very difficult to set up in truly statesmanlike fashion a Federal Department of Education.

The N. E. A. at Pittsburg was enthusiastic about the program proposing such a department. The bill which had been drafted by the Emergency Commission carried also an appropriation for \$100,000,000. It was difficult to decide which was favored more, the Department or the appropriation. To many a careful student of the situation the confusion of issues

seemed altogether unfortunate. Both matters, namely federal influence in education and adequate support of schools, are important but they are distinct issues. To put them together is to jeopardize both.

For example, suppose one is discussing for the moment what kind of a department can be set up without reference to the appropriation, one encounters as a promising proposal the proposition that the Department of the Interior be transformed into a department devoting its energies chiefly to education. Whether Secretary Lane would favor such a plan did not appear explicitly, but it was evident that he saw insurmountable obstacles in the way of organizing a new department. Such plans need to be carefully weighed. They call for the highest educational intelligence, whether there is an appropriation or not. Indeed, the appropriation may tend to cloud the issues of organization.

The N. E. A. was fortunate in its choice of Professor Strayer of Teachers College as its president because it will require the best thinking of the educational profession to lay far-sighted plans of organization. It is first of all a problem of educational organization which confronts the educators of the country.

To the present writer the proposal to begin the work of a new federal department with a great appropriation seems unwise. There is much to be done by way of study before we know how to spend wisely federal money in school organization. There are evidences on every hand that dangers beset systems of schools which are dominated from Washington. There are as has been pointed out, vast educational undertakings now under way. The nation needs a strong central agency to guide our educational efforts. This agency must be scientific rather than politically or socially dominating. The country needs the best intelligence that can be brought to the task of studying American school problems and unifying practice. It is less important at this juncture that the federal treasury

should be drawn upon for the direct support of common schools than that there should be a unifying of national educational policies.

The N. E. A. ought to be persuaded to adopt a program of careful study of the proper functions of a Federal Department of Education. Let the possible activities of such a department be planned along broad scientific lines, after the pattern of the Department of Agriculture. Let its relations to existing agencies be carefully looked into. Let wise provision be made for the broadest coöperation with existing agencies. If a vast appropriation for schools is needed let that matter come up in a separate bill and be debated on its own merits. In the meantime let the best possible form of central educational department be minutely described by the educators of the country. When there is agreement on the kind of a department needed there will be no lack of strong arguments in favor of its creation.

THE ENGLISH EDUCATION BILL

The English Education bill fathered by Herbert Fisher, President of the Board of Education, having passed the House of Commons, is practically certain of being enacted into law. By the provisions of this bill education in England is made compulsory for all children up to 14 years of age; no child under 14 is allowed to work for wages except outside of school hours and earlier than 8 P. M. Local districts have the option of extending the compulsory age to 15. In addition children under 6 are provided with infant schools, and all schools are to be adequately equipped with apparatus and grounds for physical training. Moreover, the bill stipulates compulsory continuation schools for all young people between the ages of 14 and 16 and seven years after the war this age is to be extended to 18. In short the new measure prevents child labor for a quarter of a million children, provides for the physical welfare

of 5,000,000, and guarantees the right, at least, of 2,000,000 to have advanced training.

Two features of the continuation program deserve special comment. The curriculum is not primarily prevocational or industrial. Courses prescribed include history, literature and "other subjects of educational value." Mathematics, language, vocational training and military training are left optional, apparently at the discretion of local boards. So far so good. But the second feature is not so happy; indeed because of it the Fisher bill met vigorous opposition from many English educational leaders. The continuation work is set for eight hours a week, less than an hour and a half for each school day. And even for this short period a child between 14 and 16 must be released from employment. Continuation classes are forbidden after 7 p.m. This means that on top of, or possibly in the midst of, a full working day of hard labor, a boy or girl must go to school an hour and a half. Such a period, giving time perhaps for two classes, cannot be considered of great value. Indeed, it is surprising that Mr. Fisher did not agree to a compromise said to have been suggested by manufacturers who opposed the bill. They offered to support half-time education for five days a week for all children between 14 and 16 provided that no compulsory education should be required after 16 years of age. It is to be hoped that after the war the admirable features of the bill providing education for children under 14 may be extended with equal liberality to young people up to 18.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CONFERENCE WITH SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1918 AND 1919

Three great national crises in modern times have brought sharply into view the significance of education for national welfare. Precisely a hundred and ten years ago, when Germany as a nation was neither in existence nor dreamed of and

when Prussia lay prostrate at the feet of Napoleon, Baron Stein gave to William von Humboldt the task of organizing the schools of the state to serve the "civic ideal." Under the spur of the then new and rapidly developing national consciousness elementary, secondary, and higher education was thoroughly reorganized. The perfectly definite aim and view was the making of "intelligent, God-fearing, patriotic Germans." The building up of the German system of education to conform to that ideal was coincident with the consolidation of the German Empire, and in the judgment of most people has been largely the occasion of that "efficiency" which, however much we may detest the purposes which have directed it, has been the wonder of the world for the last four years. Again, fifty years ago France after being humiliated by Bismarck set to work to rebuild her educational structure, developing thereby an efficiency which has been even more the marvel of the world and forever made impossible any reference to "decadent France." And now the President of the United States, the Commissioner of Education, governors, and presidents of state universities are issuing eloquent and effective appeals in view of the war conditions, and perhaps even more because of conditions that are sure to arise after the war, that all our educational institutions be maintained at the highest point of effectiveness, that students in the schools be urged to remain unless imperatively called to some specific form of service, and that pupils now being graduated from the high schools be urged to go on to higher levels of education. It is felt that it is worse than futile to go on making munitions unless we make men and women, and that in a very true sense our schools are our greatest munition plants.

It is not surprising, therefore, that our thirtieth annual conference with related secondary schools, instead of being regarded as representing interests ordinarily of first-class importance but for the time being secondary, was pervaded by

a spirit of unprecedented interest. Attendance was especially large in the departments of Romance, history, mathematics, home economics, Greek and Latin, English and commercial education. It is of interest, though perhaps not especially significant, that the enrollment in the Romance section was in excess of that of the previous year by almost exactly the same number in which that of the German section fell behind the record of the previous year.

More than ever before the impression remains from this conference that subjects were opened up which should receive further attention at the conference of next year. It may be expected that the course of the year ahead may lead to marked readjustments of relative emphasis among the subjects of the curriculum. New importance seems likely to be attached to mathematics and science, history and civics, and modern languages. Specifically, subjects preparatory to engineering will be emphasized. The demand for chemists is said to be utterly beyond the present possibility of supply.

The coming year is certain to be full of events in the light of which educational meanings and values will stand out with unprecedented clearness. In that period most careful study must be made of subject-matter, methods, aims, and organization. And we have reason to look forward to the conference of 1919 with the liveliest interest.

Communications

Editor School Review:

The joint statement of Professors Bagley and Judd on "Enlarging the American Elementary School," in the May number of *School Review*, is a most valuable contribution to the movement for a better adjustment of the school to the needs of the children and of American society.

However, there is one short-coming in the statement, it seems to me, to which attention should be called. Whether